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ABSTRACT

This booklet focuses on what African-American parents can do to provide their children with a firm foundation for educational success. African-American children sometimes do not do well in school because of the following factors: (1) poor self-image; (2) different learning styles; (3) low standards set by teachers and parents; and (4) poor preparation for school. Positive learning experiences early in life are needed if African-American children are to develop to their full potential. Parents can do much to build foundations for learning by doing the following: (1) developing the child's self-esteem and acknowledging the child's culturally influenced learning style; (2) developing the child's language skills, including fostering bilingualism in Black English and standard English; and (3) helping the child learn to read. Specific suggestions are given for each of these areas. An eight-item list of references, and a 14-item selected reading list for children and for adults are provided. (SLD)

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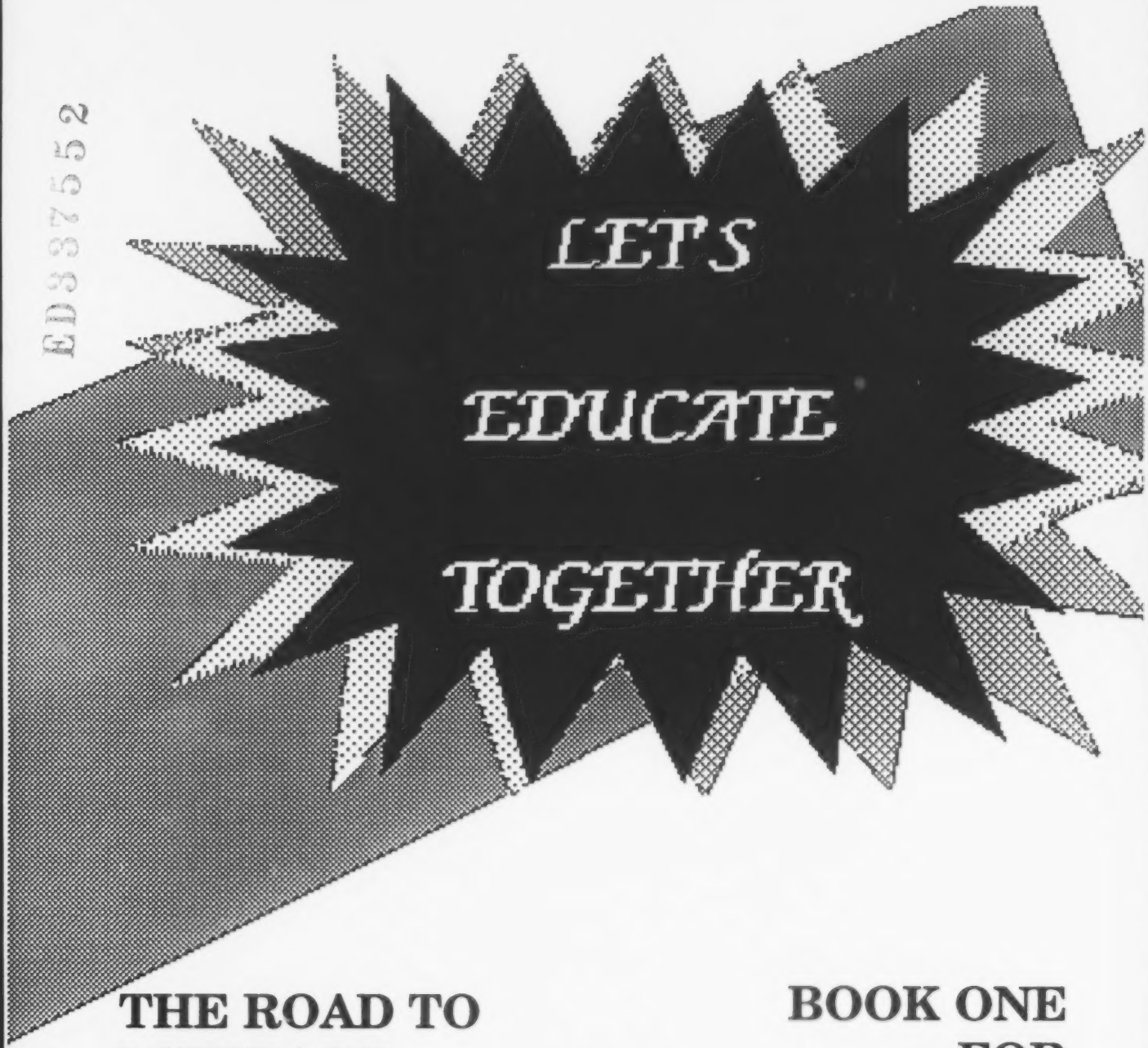

THE ROAD TO LITERACY SERIES:

BOOK ONE FOR

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AFRICAN AMERICAN PARENTS WITH CHILDREN

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The Road To Literacy Series:
Book One

For African American
Parents
with Children

A Black Parent's Guide To
Laying The Foundation
For Their Children's
Educational
Success.

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I Ask My Children...

What did you learn today
did anyone tell you how to meet tomorrow
did anyone tell you why there are people
who don't know you.....

did anyone seem to know who you were
did anyone know that you have the blood of Africa
in your veins
or did they pretend to be blind to your color and thereby
deny its value

What did you learn.....

did anyone explain the nature of freedom
did anyone explain the nature of racism.....

did anyone explain the nature of love
did anyone know anything about those things
did anyone know anything
What did you learn today?

-Ronald Coleman

*From a 1977 calendar, "Black Children Just Keep on Growing."

TO THE PARENT

This book is for you, the Black parent, the most important teacher of an African-American child.

You have BLACK PARENT POWER. As Black parents you know your children's needs better than anyone else. Parents are partners in the education of their children. Parents are the first teachers. As parents you hold the key to your children's educational success.

African-American children have unique needs and learning styles. African-American children have a unique culture and history. Because of these unique needs this book focuses on what African-American parents can do to provide their children with a firm foundation for educational success.

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What's Happening to African-American Children?

.....and we can not blame the child.

When five year old African-American children start school they are ready to learn. They want to learn. By the time they reach the fourth grade that desire to learn has often turned into apathy and disinterest.

The education system in America has not been effective for most African-American children. In many cases,

* African-American children graduate from school with low reading levels.

* African-American children graduate from school with poor math backgrounds.

* African-American children graduate from school with poor science backgrounds.

It is important for parents to understand why many African-American children are not learning as much as they can in American schools.

Here are a few reasons:

Poor Self-Image

Many African-American children have poor images of themselves. This lack of self-esteem effects how well our children learn and grow. Often school programs do not address the African-American child's need to develop pride and a sense of self worth . Children who do not feel good about themselves and their community often have no desire to learn.

Different Learning Styles

All children learn in different ways. They also have unique needs and learning styles. Education for African-American children should focus on their affective needs (self-esteem, emotional needs) as well as their basic skill needs. Schools, school books, and teachers are often reluctant to address African-American children's learning styles. Most schools are not teaching African-American children in a manner that will motivate them to learn.

Low Standards Set By Teachers / Parents

If you expect children to do poorly, they will. Some teachers lower their expectations of children based on race, gender, family income, or appearance. If children are not expected to do well, then they probably will not.

Many parents do not expect, demand, and get the best from their children. Many parents do not expect, demand and get the best from the schools, books, and teachers that their children come in contact with. If children are not expected to do well, they probably will not. If the schools are not expected to provide a decent education, they will not.

Poor Preparation for School

To be ready to do well in first grade children need to have certain skills. They should be able to recognize left from right, up from down, the written form of their names, and be able to tell the difference between shapes, letters and words. These skills are important if children are to do well in school Many African-American children start school without these skills and fall behind as they go through school. These children will spend the majority of their time in school trying to catch-up.

African-American children **will** learn and <u>can</u> learn when given the support, motivation, and the proper tools to learn. African-American children **will** and <u>can</u> learn when they are taught to believe in themselves and are supported by learning strategies that take into account how African-American children learn.

LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION

BUILDING SELF-ESTEEM

HOW BLACK CHILDREN LEARN

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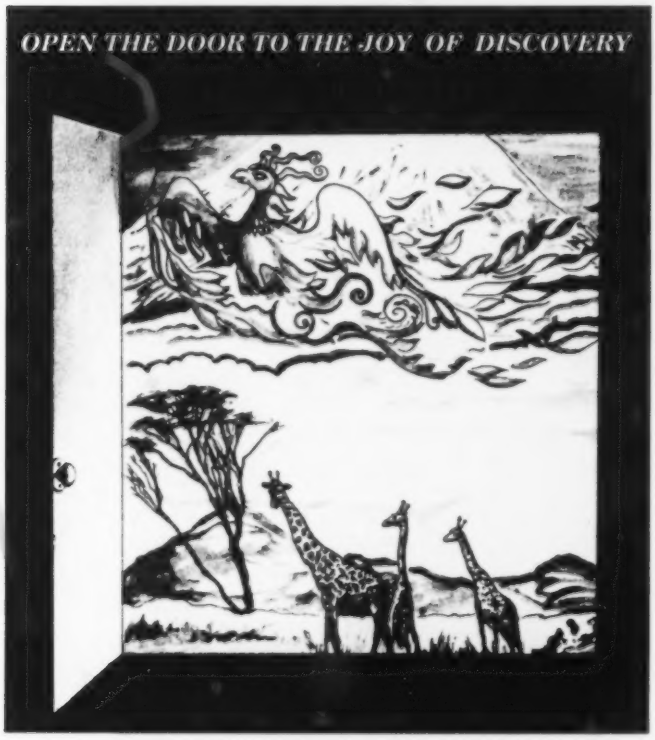
LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING



Learning begins at birth. Newborn babies learn very quickly that when they cry, mommy will pick them up, or when they touch a mobile, it moves. By the time a child becomes aware that night follows day, that snow falls in winter and that fire is hot, he or she is learning thinking skills that will be used to learn in the future.

For young children, there is a joy in discovery. Children, at a very young age, have a natural curiosity about the world. They want to feel, touch, and see everything. The more children explore their world in the early years, the easier it will be for them to learn when they are older.

Many African-American children begin to lose their natural curiosity to learn around the fourth grade. Parents can help by understanding something about how children learn.

Children learn that some experiences feel good and some feel bad. Children learn not to do the thing or things that caused them pain or problems when an experience feels bad. When an experience feels good, children will want to repeat that experience.

African- American children need positive learning experiences early in life if they are to develop to their full potential.

Black Parent Power means you can help your children to learn, to grow, to be all that they can be, to love themselves, and to succeed in the world against all odds. African- American children need to be reminded when they are young, that learning is good, that they are good, and that they can learn.

DID YOU KNOW?

One half of your child's intelligence is formed in the first 4 years of life.

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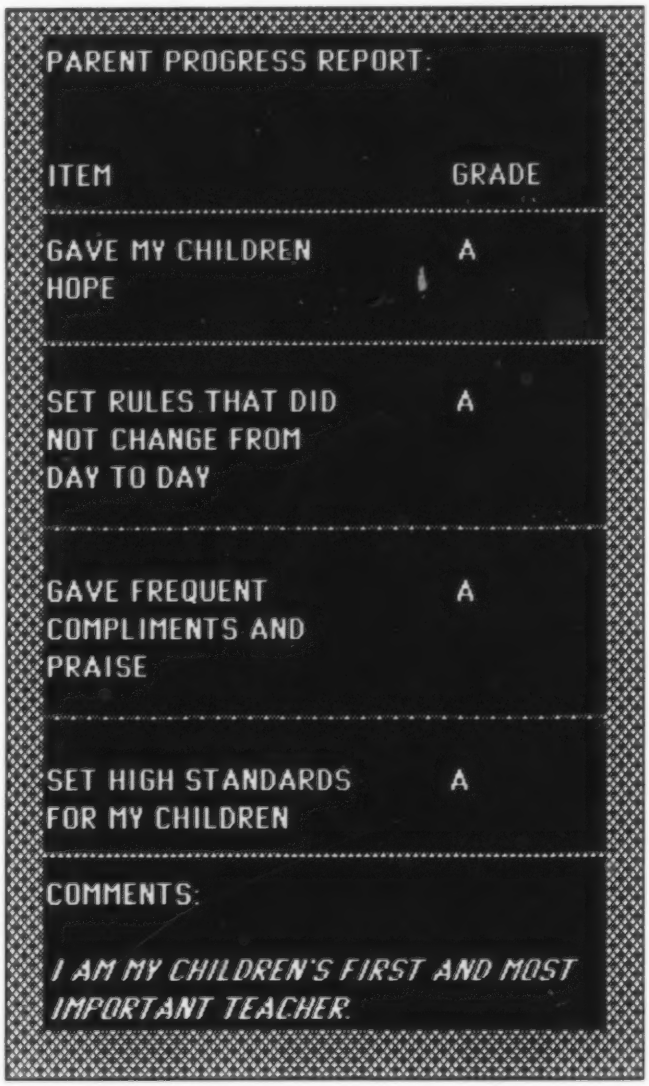
BLACK PARENT POWER MEANS LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. .....HERE'S HOW:

1. Give your children **Hope**.* Children should know that the world is going to be better for them. Talk to your children about how much better their lives will be with a good education. Stress the positive things in your children's lives.

2. **Be Consistent.*** Children need to learn that they can count on adults. If you promise to do something, do it. When you set rules for your children, do not change them from day to day.

3. **Be Complimentary.*** Children need a lot of love, praise, and attention. Children are very sensitive to what their parents say to them and about them. When your children learn something new, tell them how great it is that they have learned it. Hug them. Give them a treat. Ask them to teach what they have learned to another person.

4. **Set High Standards.*** Expect your children to learn. Expect your children to read and write at an early age. Expect your children to do well in school. Expect your children to go on to college. Tell your children what you expect and why. They deserve the best, and you can help them get the best from themselves and the world. Believe your children can learn, and your children will learn.



5. Believe you are **The Most Important Teacher** * in your children's life. Your home is the first classroom your children will experience. Your children are counting on you for guidance. Take responsibility for what they learn, how they learn, and why. Do not leave it only to the school or day care center.

* These concepts were adopted from Jawanza Kunjufu's A Talk With Jawanza Chicago: African American Images, 1989.

DEVELOPING YOUR CHILD'S SELF-ESTEEM

If you control a man's thinking, you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think, you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.

- Carter G. Woodson [1]
The Miseducation of
the Negro,1933.

This statement was written by a famous African-American educator, Carter G. Woodson. Carter G. Woodson wrote this almost 57 years ago and it is still true today. Our children are not receiving the kind of education that will allow them to see, as one African-American educator put it, " their experiences, history, culture, and lifestyles in their education." [2]

The effects of racism have badly damaged the spirits of many young Black children. The images of African-Americans on TV, in magazines, and in school textbooks have had a negative effect on the minds of Black children. For some, their self-esteem (how they feel about themselves) has been so badly damaged that they do not have the will to learn to read, write and learn math.

Children who do not feel good about themselves and their community often have no desire to learn and are not successful in school.

You express your love for children by making sure they have warm clothes, a place to live and food in their stomachs. Touching, holding, hugging, and smiling also let's your children know that you love them. Your children's self-esteem is firmly rooted in your expressions of love and confidence in them.

Self-esteem means to have a good opinion about one's self.

Children who have high self-esteem are more likely to:[3]

1. Like themselves

2. Be excited about life

3. Be happy

4. Be fun to think with

5. Do well in school

6. Enjoy activities

7. Make friends

8. Make healthy choices

9. Feel good about their work

10. Have a promising future

Worth more than all the gold and silver in the world!

The most important thing that you can do as a parent is to help your children develop positive self-images. A positive self-concept and knowledge of self are two of the most important gifts you can give your children. It means much more than toys, clothes, or money and lasts a lifetime.

Here is what you can do to help your children develop good self images:

Nurturing Self-Esteem Through:

Expressions of love

Children need a lot of personal praise and attention. Show you care by expressing your love, giving praise, hugging, and keeping a positive attitude. When your children do something good, praise them. Praise the effort as well as the accomplishment. Even small accomplishments deserve praise. When your children do something bad, do not say "you are a bad boy or girl." Instead, say, "what you did is bad or wrong." Be sure to explain why it was bad or wrong so that they can change their behavior next time.

Showing Respect

Children learn respect through receiving respect. Calling your children names, cursing, or in any way telling them that they are stupid, lazy, or dumb will only hurt them and destroy how they feel about themselves. Children are like fragile flowers: they might survive a tornado, but they will probably be injured in the process.

Also, children have important things to say. Your children's self-esteem will grow when others listen to what they have to say. Encourage your children to talk freely, to think freely, to imagine freely.

Ethnic Pride

African-American children need to know their history and culture if they are to be proud members of the world community. They need to know who they are and where they came from, if they are to know where they are going. Black Parent Power means you can help your children understand their history and culture. The home may be the only place that African-American children learn the truth about their people's history.

Developing Responsibility

Developing responsibility in children is important if you want them to grow up to be responsible adults. Involving your children in the regular work of your household will let them know that they are important and useful members of your family. Your children can help separate and wash clothes, help in grocery shopping, make their beds, and clean their rooms. When they start school, teach them that it is their responsibility to learn, to do their homework, and to be the best they can be.

Experiencing Success

Oh, the sweet taste of success; there is nothing like it, especially for children. When your children succeed at a task or learn something new, they will feel good about what they have done. Success leads to confidence, and confidence leads to positive feelings about self. Children often can not finish tasks that are too hard. They should be given tasks that they can do, and they should be encouraged to do better and more.

A positive self-image and high self esteem are gifts that any parent, rich or poor, or of any nationality, can give. For the African American child, it is important to have a good feeling about him/her self in order to meet the challenges of today's society.

People learn in different ways. Some people learn best by listening, some by reading; other people learn by doing, while some learn best by working with others. Children of different ethnic groups learn in different ways as well.

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEARNING STYLES

Experts have noted that Black and White children tend to have different learning styles which are shaped by the differences in culture and life-styles.[4] African-American children's learning styles are shaped by African-American culture. Every child deserves respect for their own unique style of learning.

To make your children more comfortable with learning, African-American parents should be aware of the unique learning styles of African-American children.

The African-American Child:

is feeling-oriented
uses language creatively
uses body language to express him or herself
uses nonverbal communication
learns better through speaking and listening
learns better by doing things
likes spontaneity and variety
uses strong colorful language
is people oriented
likes to work cooperatively

Have you ever noticed that many Black children can memorize all the words to a popular song or make up their own raps but cannot read well enough to pass a reading test? This happens because the children can relate to the words, the music, and the rhythm. They feel the music and the words. The words have meaning. They can say or sing the words, and they can dance to the music.

Teaching Black children means using a holistic approach. Doing two or more of the following when teaching new skills and ideas will greatly increase the chance that your children will learn these new skills and ideas:
Objective: Learn a new word

Activity	Example
Reading	Read the word and the meaning of the word.
Writing	Write the word and the definition. Use the word in a sentence.
Oral	Explain the meaning of a word. Give (orally) an example.
Visual	Draw a picture of what the word is, match the word with a picture of the word and play a game that teaches the new word.
Demonstration	See an example of the word, be able to touch and feel the object the word represents, trace the word with the fingers and play a game that teaches the new word.
Creative Expression	Draw a picture, make up a skit, create an image of the word and act out the word.

African-American children will learn better when teachers and parents use many different ways to teach a skill. Reading a story and then asking your children to draw what they think they have read is an example of using more than one method to teach a skill.

Black children will learn if they feel that what they are learning has something to do with them, or they can see how they can use it in their daily lives. They will learn if they have the chance to practice or try out what they have learned. Black children need to see a purpose in what they are learning. Also, your children may learn better if other children are involved and working together.

Parents should view these differences as good. They indicate the personal strengths and power of African-American children. These differences are a starting place for developing future learning skills.

Here is what you can do to build on the strengths and power of the African American child:

Children learn and express themselves through what they know and what they feel.
Children need to express their feelings and to share in what others are feeling. By encouraging your children to talk freely, you will be helping them to develop important communication skills.

Developing a positive self-concept is as important as developing the basic skills.
African-American children need praise and guidance if they are to develop strong self-images. A strong self-image is important if African-American children are to learn. By giving your children a lot of praise after they have learned something new or done something good, you will be helping them learn that you expect the best. Your children will need your constant encouragement to continue learning.

Art, music, and dance are cornerstones of Black culture.
African-American children often know (and memorize) words to popular songs and make up raps (rhymes) of their own. This is a natural form of expression. It shows creativity and good verbal skills. Art, music, and dance can, and should, be used to teach children other skills, such as reading and writing. Popular songs can be used to teach reading. Using natural forms of expressions such as drawing, painting or putting on plays and skits to teach your children new skills, will let your children know that learning can be enjoyable and rewarding.

Children learn through playful activities.
Play is a way that children discover the world. See your children's play activities as a chance to learn. Find playful activities that will help your children explore language, words, reading, and thinking.

Children love to be challenged.
Because our society has low expectations of African-American children, it is important that they be pushed to work hard and to do their best. Setting high goals for your children will let them know what you expect from them and will challenge them to do their best. And remember, the greatest gift you can give your children is the gift of success. So when your children do something well or learn something new, praise them for a job well done.

Teach your children to work and play well with other children.
Encourage cooperation. If you have older children, have them work with the younger ones. Older children can help with homework, take younger children to the library and help them complete tasks. Older children can be important role models for your younger children.

Motivation is the key to learning.

Motivating your children to learn involves finding out what turns them on and off. All children have talents and strengths. It may be writing, drawing, painting, speaking, thinking, dancing, penmanship, singing, painting, reciting, making up stories, playing board games, rhyming, doing math, or thinking. Help your children discover their strengths and talents. When you nurture those talents, you will be nurturing your children's self-esteem as well. Find your children's strengths and encourage their growth.

Explore Afrrican- American culture.

African-American children need to see themselves in the books that they read. Their own experiences and the experiences of people like them should be included in their learning activities. Help your children explore African-American and African culture: foods, music, folklore, art, literature and history. Teaching your children African-American culture and history will give them a sense of pride in their people and themselves.

Educators say that African-American children learn best when physical and oral activities are involved. Your children will learn best from thinking, working, and playing with people, materials and ideas.

READING AND LANGUAGE

BLACK ENGLISH

THE READING CONNECTION

Black Children can not go into the 21st century unable to read and write. Literacy is the key to success.

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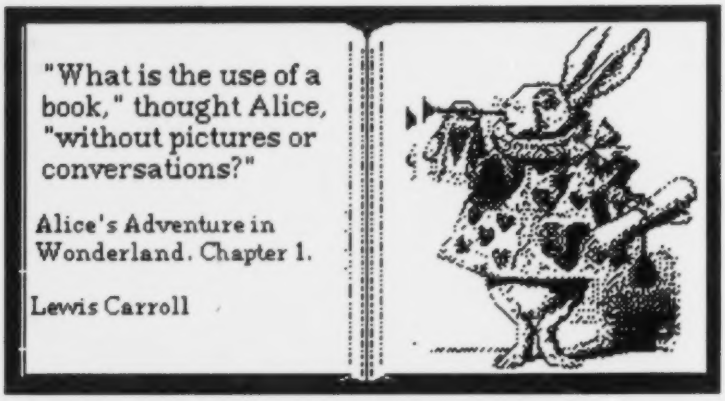
DEVELOPING YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE SKILLS


"What is the use of a book," thought Alice, "without pictures or conversations?"
Alice's Adventure in Wonderland. Chapter 1.
Lewis Carroll

Reading can be described (especially in the beginning stages of reading) as "speech written down."

Many African-American children have great verbal skills. This is a good starting place for teaching reading. Parents can use their children's oral language to develop their vocabulary and reading skills.

In the movie The Color Purple, Nettie taught Celie to read by writing down the words (sight words) of various objects in their house on pieces of paper. She then placed the pieces of paper on the appropriate objects. Celie could see, feel, taste, and handle the objects she already knew. Nettie used the words that Celie already knew to teach her to read.

Your children will learn sounds and words by hearing and speaking them.

As your children begin to read, they will learn that letters and words stand for the sounds which people make. Learning to read will be easier for your children if you start with their oral language (words and ideas they already know) and move from there into reading and writing new words. For, it is through the use of oral language, using words and ideas, that children thoroughly learn the words and their meanings.

Every opportunity should be given to your children to use their language to describe, explain, question, entertain, and solve problems. You can teach your children how to use their "talents"- their common sense, their language and their minds to understand and communicate new ideas .

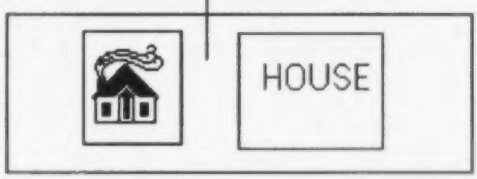
Here is what you can do:

1. Provide your children with many experiences that they can talk about. This does not mean spending a lot of money on trips and outings. Taking walks in the neighborhood can provide you and your child with many things to talk about. Regular talks about family events, problems, or things that happened in the neighborhood are ways of taking the everyday experiences of life and turning them into learning opportunities.

2. Help your children express their inner feelings and thoughts. Encourage them to talk about how they feel. Help them to find words that describe how they feel.

3. Use television programs, pictures, objects, stories and family outings to help children learn new vocabulary words. Print and language are everywhere. For instance, we see printed words on billboards, signs, landmarks, menus, advertisements, television, newspapers, magazines, movies, letters, cards, records, songs, notices, telephone books, cereal boxes, records and food containers. Use all of these to teach your children new words and their meanings.

4. Making the connection between your children's oral language (words and ideas they are able to say) and the same words written down on paper is a good way to begin to teach reading. If a word is a part of your children's speaking vocabulary, the same word can become a sight word (a word the child will recognize when it is written).



Another good idea is to have your children make up sentences, phrases or short stories that you write down for them. Then read what you have written.

5. Expand your children's vocabulary by adding words and ideas to what they say. The following example shows two ways of doing this:

Example 1:

Child: "gimme cookie"
Parent: " you want a cookie".

The parent here is trying to expand on what the child has said by adding words the child did not use or did not know. This does not help the child learn new language. A better way of responding is as follows:

Example 2:

Child: "gimme cookie
Parent: "These are oatmeal cookies. Do you want an oat meal cookie? I will have an oatmeal cookie, too." [5]

6. Read stories, proverbs and poems to your children. Read these again and again to your children, each time reading with style and emotion. Children will pay attention to the way your voice changes as you read. This will help them recognize words when they are used in different ways.

Children need to play with ideas, test out ideas, think about ideas, make mistakes, and try new ways of doing things. Just as you allow your children to play with blocks, paints and clay, allow them to play with words, letters, sounds, and ideas.

BLACK ENGLISH

> "The children's language is them, is they mommas and kinfolks and community and black culture and the black experience made manifest in verbal form."
> -Smitherman 1985[6]

The majority of Black people in America speak Black English at one time or another. Black English is an important part of Black culture. For Black children it is a part of their heritage and community life. In any neighborhood, Black children may be heard to say:

Black English	for	StandardEnglish (TV English)
Bob chair		Bob's chair
hep		help
He go to the store		He goes to the store.
Joe done took the cookie		Joe has taken the cookie.

The purpose of language is communication.
Black English is not slang, jive talk, or "bad English". Black English is a dialect of English. It is not inferior. It is different. There are two main features of Black English: (1) how African-Americans say words (pronunciation) and (2) how African-Americans string words together in a sentence (grammar). The important thing to understand about any language, including Black English, is that there is no right or

wrong language. All language is good if it serves the purpose of communication.

While many parents, as well as children speak Black English, most Black parents want their children to speak standard English as well. Speaking standard English is a skill that your children will need if they are to advance in school, since the school's program is taught in standard English. If your children speak Black English and standard English they will be bilingual. Most Black parents want their children to be bilingual.

To help your children become bilingual, here is what you can do:

1. Use standard English when speaking to your children. It is very important while your children are young that they, "hear" Standard English spoken in the home.It becomes harder to change speech patterns when one gets older.

2. It is better to teach your children standard English by using it yourself than to correct them every time they say something in Black English. Your children will imitate how you talk. You do not want to discourage your children from talking and expressing themselves. If you do correct your children's speech do it in such a way that they know there is nothing wrong with what they said.Tell them there are other ways of saying the same thing.

3. Do not speak "baby talk" to your children. Speak in complete sentences, and encourage your children to do the same.

4. Be more concerned with how well your children communicate rather than how they talk, when they are young.

5. Use the Language Experience Approach to introduce and teach your children standard English. Here's how:

Have your children dictate a word, phrase or passage (especially Black English words or phrases) to you. Write the words or words on a piece of paper, properly translating anything that your children say in Black English to standard English. Read the word or words to your children. Have them read it with you. Have them read it on their own. Have them write the word or words.

In this activity children experience, dictate, listen, speak and write. Gradually, they will learn new words and ways of saying things in standard English.

The purpose of language is to communicate ideas.
When your children enter school they will probably know over 10,000 words. It is more important that they know the words and what they mean, than how they say it. It is important to understand that whatever language your children use, it is natural for them. It is not in the children's best interest to attempt to destroy their first language.

The idea is to help your children grow with language by learning new words and ideas. Help your children use sentences to communicate their ideas. Help your children make sense of words so that they are able to understand what they read.

If you use standard English , your children will learn it from you. If you concentrate on how well your children speak rather than on what they have to say, then you may send a message to your children that something is wrong with them and what they have to say. Constantly correcting and criticizing how your children talk stifles their thoughts and expression.

Teaching your children to communicate their ideas so they are understood, to listen carefully, to write clearly, to understand what they read, and to think logically is time better spent than correcting how they say words.

When your child enters school.
If your children speak Black English you should be aware of some potential problems that your children might have when they start school.

Sometimes Black children fail to read because the school fails to understand their language. Because Black English is considered by society as "bad English," many teachers think that the children who speak Black English are stupid or inferior. For many teachers, the language used by the children, their inflections- their intonations, their expressions are so different from their own, they assume that Black students have learning problems. Teachers sometims label Black students who speak Black English as slow, lazy, or learning disabled.

These labels should be challenged by the parent. Black children come to school knowing many things. They express what they know as they would in their homes and communities. This is okay. The school should be sensitive to the culture and the language of Black students.

Black Parents Be Aware:

Many teachers may lower their expectations of the student based on how the student talks.
This damages Black children's self-esteem, may stop them from expressing themselves in the school setting, and may turn them off to learning.

The goal of learning to speak standard English should not be confused with learning to read.
Instead of teaching children new words, the meanings of words, and using words in sentences, many teachers will spend time correcting how children say words. This stops children from learning to read.

If the material that children are learning to read differs from how they talk, there may be some problems.
Beginning reading should involve the language, the culture, the experiences and the interests of the children. Black children learning to read, and especially children who speak Black English, will have an easier time if what they read is more like how they talk. Teachers should use the Language Experience Method with Black English speakers who are just beginning to read. This will closely match the experiences and the language of the children with what they are reading.

Parents! Become involved in your children's educational program. Question the teacher. Make sure your children are getting the education they deserve.

Teaching Your Children to Read

A child's first teacher is his or her parent. The home is the first classroom. <u>You can be your child's reading role model.</u> If you read, your child will do as you do. If you make reading fun and a part of your family's daily life, your child will do the same.

You can lay the foundation to build the reading and learning skills that your children will need when they enter school. Here are some tips for laying this foundation in a loving and motivating way.

Here is what you can do to help your children learn to read:

Read To Your Children Daily (if possible).

Read different kinds of books. Read to your children everyday for fun (at least 20 - 30 minutes a day). Ask your children questions about the stories you are reading and talk about the pictures and people in the stories. Reading different kinds of books will help your children learn more about the world while learning new words and ideas.

HELP YOUR CHILDREN TO:
learn the sounds for letters
learn to say new words
learn the meanings of new words
learn to understand sentences
learn to think and think to learn
develop a love of books and reading
learn that others have feelings and lives similar to and different from) their own
develop their own imagination (creative power)

Make Reading Fun.

1. Choose a good book. Also, have your child choose the book he/ she wants you to read.
2. Have your child sit on your lap or beside you. Draw close. Cuddle up.
3. Read the story with enthusiasm and expression in your voice.
4. Make sure your child can see the book, the pages, and the words as you read.

5. Let your child turn the pages in the book or hold it while you read.
6. Invite your child to get involved in the reading by:
    * talking together about the pictures.
    * talking together about the story.
    * guessing what will happen next in the story.
    * talking together about the words in the story.
    * having your child join in on rhymes and refrains in the book.

7. Give your child a hug when you have finished reading.

Develop Your Children's Book Sense

Expose your children to books and words as early as possible. Even children 6-8 months of age will have a physical response to books. They will enjoy exploring books. Babies can, and will, explore books as a part of their everyday play. They will touch , smell, lick, kiss, and turn pages in books. At a very young age, children should learn to:

hold books right side up;
turn pages one at a time from front to back;
look at pages in a left to right sequence;
chatter to the pages imitating reading;
point to and name objects on the pages as they learn to talk;
know the difference between print and pictures.[7]

Start the Library Habit Early

Go to the library often (at least once a week). Introduce your children to your local librarian. The librarian will help your children locate excellent books on a variety of topics. When your children are toddlers, have them go with you to the library and have them help you find a few books to bring home.

Give Your Children Book(s) Of Their Own.

Worth more than candy, records, radios and toys, are books of their own, that your children will enjoy. Children like to own books. This will motivate your children to read and will let them know that you value reading.

Start With What Your Children Already Know.
It will be easier for your children to learn to read if the first words they learn to read are part of their own vocabulary (words and ideas they already know). Reading will be meaningful to your children when they can relate to and understand what they are reading.

Mistakes Are O.K.
Children need time and practice to make sense of the printed word, so do not look for word perfect reading. Let the reading process unfold naturally. Children will make errors. This is all a part of the process of learning to read.

Self-Esteem, Self-Esteem.....
Finally, reading is a personal act. If your children feel good about themselves they will and can learn to read. If your children understand that reading is a tool that can be used to explore the world and they see themselves as an important part of the world, they will want to explore it. Nurture your children's self-esteem.

Help your children make the reading connection.

A Final Note

Maybe you do not have much money to give to your children. Maybe you haven't had much education. Maybe you are just learning how to read yourself.

Whatever your situation, your children are counting on you to give them the head start they will need in school and in life. You do not need a lot of money or expensive things to help your child learn to read and to do well in school. You have a lot to give and teach. Doing simple things together like talking, playing, and going places can be enjoyable for you and your children and will provide you with many opportunities to teach your children new skills.

Remember to:[8]

Talk to your children all the time, no matter how young they are.
Sing songs to and with your children.
Play counting games. Teach your children their numbers and ABCs.
Give your children books of their own.
Take trips together and talk about what you have seen.
Don't just watch a TV program. Talk about it.
Read stories to your children. Read stories together.
Talk about what you have read.
Teach your children about their heritage and culture.
Nurture your children's self-esteem.

With love that you have in your heart for your children and your desire for them to learn, your children are well on their way to success.

Parent Kit Available:

There are many ideas in this book. There are important ideas like nurturing your children's self-esteem, developing your children's language and reading skills, and teaching your children about their heritage and culture. There are many activities that you can do for and with your children. We have available to any parent who requests it, a free Parent's Home Reading Kit that provides parents with activities that they can do at home with their children.

You can order The Parent's Home Reading Kit from:

The Alternative Schools Network
1105 W. Lawrence Avenue
Chicago, Il. 60640
(312) 728-4030

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

References:

1. Woodson, Carter G. 1933. *The Miseducation of the Negro.* Washington, D.C.: Associated Press. pp. 84-85.

3. Hale-Benson, Janet E. 1986. *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles.* Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press. p. 157.

2. Koch, Joanne B and Koch, Lewis Z. 1988. *Getting in Touch With Your Child: Families in Touch Book One.* Illinois Department of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. p.8.

4. Hale-Benson, Janet E. 1986. *Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles.* Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press.

5. Holloway, Karla, F.C. Learning to Talk-Learning to Read. *In Tapping Potenial: English and Language for The Black Learner.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Reachers of English, 1985. p. 16

6. Smitherman, Geneva. 1977. *Talkin ' and Testifyin':The Language of Black America.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977.

7. Jett-Simpson-Mary. 1986. *Reading Resource Book.* Atlanta Georgia: Humanics Limited. p. 15.

8.*Reading and Leaning Tips for Parents.* Plan Inc.Washington, D.C.: 1986.

SELECTED READING LIST FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

The following is a list of books for and about African-American children and African/ African culture. These books can be found in your local library. If you can not find them, ask your librarian to order them.

Rhymes and Poetry

Giovanni, Nikkie. Ego-Tripping.
Greenfield, Eloise. Honey, I Love You and Other Poems. Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

Picture Books

Boone-Jones, Margaret. Martin Luther King, Jr. A Picture Book: Children's Press, 1968.
Halliburton, Wareen. The Picture Life of Michael Jackson. Franklin Watts, 1964.

ABC Books

Smith, Jean P. Lil Tuffy and his ABC's. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Inc. 1973
Hudson, Chery. Afro-Bets ABC and Afro-Bets 123. Chicago, Il. African-American Images.

Story Books, Coloring Books, and Folktales

Aardema, Verna. Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1975.
Sibbett, Ed. Ancient Egyptian Design Coloring Book. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1978.
Lester, Julius. Black Folktales. Grove Press, 1969.
Hamilton, Virginia. The People Could Fly. Alfred A. Knopf.

Books For Adults

The following is a list of books for African-American parents. These books can be found in your local library. If you can not find them, ask your librarian to order them
Flesch, Rudolf. Why Johnny Can't Read. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1985.
Hale-Benson, Janet E. Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles. Baltimore and London. John Hopkins University Press, 1986.
Kunjufu, Jawanza. Countering the Conspiracy to Destroy Black Boys. (Vol.2) Chicago:African American Images, 1986.
Kunjufu, Jawanza. Developing Positive Self-Images and Discipline in Black Children. Chicago: African American Images, 1986.